e a friend or relative
ho may have social phobia.
n I help?

upport of friends and relatives can help a great
The following are guidelines:

arn about the condition. Acknowledge that
ere is a real problem. Social phobia is not just a
d case of shyness; it is a medical condition and
ould be taken seriously.

understanding and recognise that allowing a
fferer to explain their problems will help him or
r to feel less isolated and ashamed of their
ndition.

not regard social phobia as anybody's 'fault.'
ither you nor the sufferer is to blame for the
ndition.

ntly encourage the sufferer to seek professional
lp. Acknowledge that this may be a difficult
cision and that the very nature of social phobia
en means that sufferers are afraid to seek help
m strangers.

courage the sufferer to seek support from
ers. Joining a support group and speaking to
er sufferers can be a helpful and positive
perience.

ce treatment begins to take affect, the sufferer
l be encouraged to begin facing up to feared
uations. Your support and understanding here is
al.

home sufferers should be encouraged to
intain a normal life-style as possible. Do not
pt your lifestyle to fit in with their fears and
xieties.

For further information you can contact:

National Phobics Society (NPS)
407 Wilbraham Road
Manchester
M21 0UT
Tel/Fax: 0161 881 1937
E mail: natphob.soc@good.co.uk

Provides information, support and advice to all those affected by anxiety disorders. Services include: network of self help groups, counselling, helpline, clinical hypnotherapy and quarterly newsletters.

Triumph Over Phobia (TOP U.K.)
PO Box 1831
Bath
BA2 4YW
Tel: 01225 330353
Fax: 01225 469212

Provides structured self help groups for phobia and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) sufferers. S.a.e to above address for information.

Depression Alliance
35 Westminster Bridge Road
London
SE1 7JB
Tel: 0171 633 9929

Provides information and support and self help groups.

ST:LF/9/014

Dealing with Social Phobia

SB SmithKline Beecham Pharmaceuticals
PARTNERS IN PSYCHIATRIC CARE

ou have social phobia?

re not alone. Up to ten percent of people are ively afraid of social situations. Their education ; their careers may be ruined and their personal nships destroyed.

fective treatments are available. Your doctor may e to help.

ave social phobia?

ou markedly embarrassed and/or do you blush emble when asked to do things in public like or eat or sign a cheque?

answered 'yes' to the above question you may ocial phobia.

l out more about this condition and what to do lease read the rest of this leaflet.

is social phobia?

phobia or social anxiety disorder as it is also is an extremely distressing medical condition. It e more common than you think and affects as as one person in ten. It often causes a severe ten paralysing fear of being watched or judged by This fear is far more serious than normal s of shyness or being nervous in public and rs may adapt their whole life to avoid entering a on where they are likely to come under scrutiny.

personal relationships, education and working re all likely to be severely damaged. Many rs resort to drugs or alcohol in order to confront ears.

phobia usually begins during adolescence and, if ted, can last a lifetime. Untreated social phobia so lead to other medical conditions such as sion and agoraphobia (fear of open or public .

"I kept turning down promotion at work because I couldn't control my anxiety about giving presentations. Even when I just had to introduce myself at a table of colleagues, my heart would pound and I could barely talk. I'd want to bolt from the room.

Alcohol used to help me cope with parties, or if I had to give a presentation. But in the end alcohol became as big a problem as the social phobia."

What are the symptoms?

Social phobia can cause symptoms such as blushing, trembling, shaking, nausea, sweating, shaky voice, dry mouth, pounding heart or sudden need to go to the toilet. If you have social phobia you are likely to suffer one or several of these symptoms whenever you encounter the feared situation. In some cases just thinking about such a situation can bring on anxiety. In an effort to prevent the onset of the symptoms you may find yourself going to extreme lengths to avoid the precipitating situation. This avoidance behaviour can be just as damaging to your quality of life as the symptoms themselves.

"Standing in line at a supermarket checkout caused me all sorts of problems. The nearer I got to the front of the queue the more I would be sweating and trembling. In the end I just stopped shopping."

"When I felt anxious around other people I would immediately start sweating. My face turned red. My throat became dry. My heart would beat out of my chest and I'd shake all over. It felt like everyone was staring at me. I could never think of anything to say."

What causes social phobia?

Although no one has discovered a single cause of social phobia, studies suggest that biological and psychological factors may play a role.

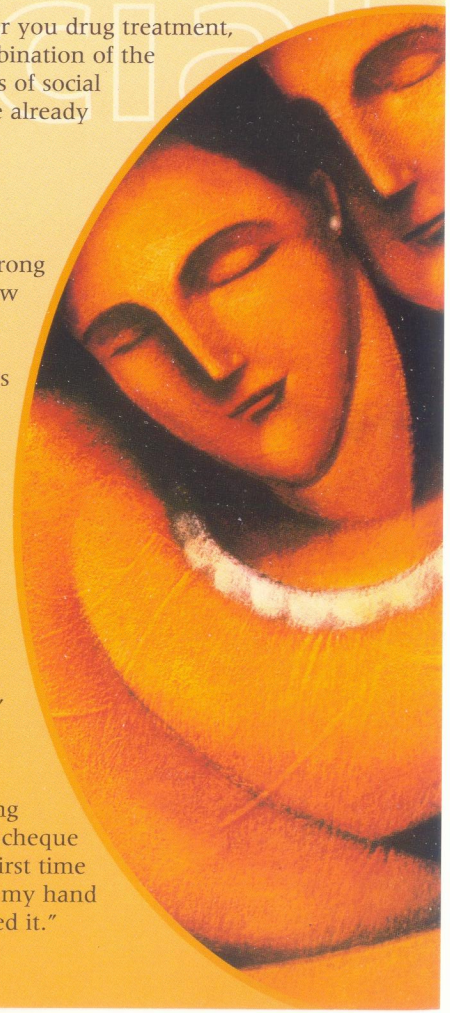
One theory is that social phobia may be related to an imbalance of a chemical called serotonin that transports signals between nerve cells in the brain. Interestingly this is the same chemical imbalance linked to other mood and anxiety disorders.

Another theory is that social phobia may run in families and especially close relatives like parent and their children.

Can social phobia be treated?

Yes, the good news is that it is a treatable condition. Although you may have suffered from social phobia for a long time it is never too late to get treatment. With the right treatment, there is a good chance you may get better.

Your doctor may offer you drug treatment, counselling or a combination of the two. Many thousands of social phobia sufferers have already benefited from these treatments.



"I thought there was something terribly wrong with me. I never knew what social phobia was, let alone that there were treatments for it."

"At first I was worried people would think I was crazy if I asked my doctor for help. But the treatment has really made a difference, all my friends have noticed."

"I first noticed the treatment was working when I had to cash a cheque at the bank. For the first time that I can remember, my hand didn't shake as I signed it."